**Environmental Risk Assessment Tool**

Introduction

The purpose of this assessment is to reduce the risk of suicide and self-harm.

Most suicides occur by hanging. Removing the means of hanging (ligature point and ligature) is the most important key step towards prevention. Risks of self-strangulation where the ligature point can be fixed on a heavy structure indicates the need to remove ligatures.

The physical environment is only one factor to be continually assessed and managed in efforts to minimise suicide risks, and it should not be viewed in isolation from other clinical risk management measures such as observation, engagement, and therapeutic activity for participants.

Risks will change and vary depending on the circumstances. For example, communal areas may be a low risk during the day, when there are lots of people around, but night presents more of a risk when staffing levels are reduced and there is less activity.

Any risk assessment is only truly valid for a point in time or for as long as the risk factors remain the same. All staff should be trained to identifying new risks.

**Managing identified risks**

The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify, assess and evaluate a risk or hazard as objectively as possible to make informed decisions and actions to remove or mitigate risk.

Every effort should be made to reduce and manage environmental risk - by removing or making safe the most hazardous and obvious risks e.g. ligature points.

However, it is extremely difficult to completely eliminate environmental risks. The goal is to spread awareness and mindfulness throughout the staff and reasonably make the necessary changes to the environment.

**Environmental risks, including the risk of suicide by ligature, has to be weighed up against other factors and risks. This includes balancing the risk against costs and benefits and the availability of funding. Recommended actions will not necessarily be taken, particularly if the costs balanced against the level of risk are prohibitive.**